the Duke observed. "Apart from toys for Enrico, there may be other things there for me to add to my Aladdin's cave."

"It must be very exciting for you," Luella smiled.

"It is indeed," the Duke agreed. "Like your father I, too, enjoy discovering new lands and new peoples."

Luella thought that was what he would be doing when she was no longer with him. She was just about to ask him where he was going when the door opened and Hewitt announced: "His Excellency the Italian Ambassador."

A man came into the room who was quite obviously Italian – not very tall, but good-looking. Luella thought there was something vaguely familiar about his face. Then she told herself that one Italian was very much like another.

The Ambassador was certainly a distinguished man. The Duke greeted him profusely. "It is most kind of you to come to visit me at such short notice, Your Excellency."

"You told me the matter was urgent," the Ambassador replied, speaking good English. "I therefore came as quickly as I could."

"I am extremely grateful to you," the Duke said. "May I offer you some refreshment?"

The Ambassador shook his head. "Thank you, but I have just come from a large and rather boring luncheon."

The Duke smiled and indicated a chair near the fireplace. He hesitated before he said to Luella: "I think, Miss Hanley, I should speak to His Excellency alone. I will send a servant to tell you when I

would like you to bring the little boy downstairs to meet him."

"Y.yes . . of course," Luella replied. She thought a little guiltily she should have suggested this herself. She went quickly from the room, closing the door behind her. As she walked up the stairs she was thinking that of course the Duke would have been embarrassed to talk about Tia in front of her. That was why he had sent her away.

Enrico was still entranced by his toys. He was pushing a wooden train under some of the chairs and making a noise like a railway engine.

Watching Enrico, his eyes bright and excited, Luella thought that, whatever the Duke might say, she would not let him back to the sordid house from which he had come. Nor would she allow him to be at the mercy of Signor Vecchio. "He is cruel and wicked," she told herself, "and even if I have to scrub floors, I will keep Enrico away from a man like that!"

It seemed to her a long time before finally a footman came to the door to say: "His Grace would be obliged if Miss Hanley an' the young gentleman would join him downstairs."

"Come along, Enrico," Luella said. "The Duke wants to see us, and there is a gentleman with him who is Italian, like you."

"I want to play with my trains," Enrico grumbled in his own language.

"They will be here when you come back," Luella said.

Enrico, however, protested. Finally a compromise was reached when Luella said he could bring the